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DE RUEHKO #2133 1310817
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 110817Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3520
INFO RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 4267
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 3071
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4154
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2128
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 6983

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 002133

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT PASS TO EAP/J, IO, G/AIAG, AND ISN
DEPT PASS TO HHS STEIGER AND BHAT
GENEVA FOR WHO/HOHMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/11/2017

TAGS: KFLU TBIO AORC PREL AMED JA

SUBJECT: JAPAN RESPONDS TO U.S. WHA OBJECTIVES; INDONESIAN
AI SAMPLE SHIPMENT NOT CONFIRMED

REF: A. (A) SECSTATE 61739

¶B. (B) JAKARTA 01319
¶C. (C) TOKYO 2132

Classified By: EST Deputy Bart D. Cobbs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On May 10, ESTOFF conveyed USG positions per reftel A to appropriate officials at Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW). The officials described Japan's views as being largely in line with U.S. positions on avian and pandemic influenza virus sample sharing and vaccine access. In follow-up calls on May 11, officials were not able to explicitly confirm that Japan had received the planned virus sample shipment from Indonesia. On smallpox, Japan shares the U.S. position against setting a date for the destruction of official smallpox stocks, but does foresee their eventual abandonment. (End summary).

No Explicit Confirmation of Indonesian Sample Shipment

¶2. (C) At the May 10 meetings, MHLW Health Policy Bureau Deputy Director Daisaku Sato and MOFA Global Affairs Division Deputy Director Taro Yamamoto said they had no update on the planned AI virus sample shipment from Indonesia. Following receipt of reftel B, Post made separate follow-up calls on May 11 to Sato and Yamamoto asking whether they had any updated information. Both officials were evasive in their replies, saying that they were not able to confirm at this time. (Comment: Yamamoto asked for our understanding that he could not say anything more at this time, strongly hinting that he had updated information, but was not authorized to share it. End comment).

API Sample Sharing and Vaccine Access

¶3. (C) Responding to U.S. positions in reftel A, MOFA's Yamamoto reiterated earlier statements that Japan shares U.S. views on the avian influenza virus sample sharing issue. However, he said that he was surprised, given Ambassador Lange's recent comments emphasizing non-pharmaceutical interventions, that the US is stating a willingness to consider contributions to WHO-managed vaccine stockpiles. According to Yamamoto, Japan has not decided on its policy toward WHO requests for stockpile contributions, and is

considering vaccine stockpiling as just one of the options for assisting developing countries. However, he stressed that non-pharmaceutical measures are not without their own technical challenges and significant financial requirements. Yamamoto said that while there is no clear GOJ position on making eligibility for WHO-sponsored vaccine access contingent on a country's free sharing of virus samples, he doubted whether Japan could support such a decision. MHLW's Sato said that Japan's views are in line with those of the U.S. He said that Japan is carefully examining the issue of WHO-managed vaccine stockpiles, but cautioned that the discussion of vaccine stockpiling could create the unrealistic expectation that global production capacity could satisfy potential demand for pandemic vaccine. (For further background, see reftel C).

Smallpox Live Virus Stocks

¶4. (SBU) Both MOFA and MHLW officials said that Japan supports the U.S. position against setting a date for the destruction of smallpox live virus stocks, but that Japan believes the stocks will be abandoned one day. At MHLW, National Institute of Infectious Diseases researcher Hiromu Yoshida, who will attend the WHA in Geneva next week, noted that Japan supports a measure to evaluate the future of smallpox research in 2009. He also stressed the need for vigilant biosecurity at the two official sites in the U.S. and Russia and called for greater transparency in research results. He also expressed concerns about the availability of data that can be used to synthesize the variola virus.

DONOVAN